



Smoke Signals

Monthly Newsletter of the Meroke RC Club

August 2009

AMA Gold Leader Club #458 - established 1963

MEROKE FLYING CLUB HOSTS WOULD BE FLYERS

On Sunday, July 19th, and again on Wednesday July 22nd, we hosted 70 children and adults (ages 8 to 59) who are interested in learning to fly radio controlled airplanes.

The event, called "Take Off and Grow" or TAG, was funded by a grant from the Academy of Model Aeronautics.

Among those who took part in this event were 26 Boy Scouts from Troops 323 and 601, who were able to satisfy a portion of the requirements to obtain an Aviation Merit Badge, and a number of children from the day camp at Chabad of Roslyn.

Seen below are some of the Scouts being briefed by an Intro Pilot.



It is the 3rd year in a row that we have successfully hosted this event and every year it gets significantly better.

County Legislator David Denenberg (shown in the following photo) paid an unexpected visit and presented the Merokes with a Citation from the Nassau County

Legislature to recognize our "commitment to enrich the quality of life of the people of Nassau County".



An "atta-boy" to Charlie Lando for coordinating this event, and of course to all of the Merokes, who gave their time to make the day so successful.

Meroke Calendar

- August 6th Club Meeting 8 PM - Show & Tell
 - August 20th Club Meeting 8 PM - Program to be determined
 - August 22nd Pattern Primer
 - August 23rd Club Fun Flys
 - September 3rd Club Meeting 8 PM - Show & Tell
 - September 13th Annual Meroke Picnic at the Cedar Creek Aerodrome
 - September 17th Club Meeting 8 PM - Program to be determined
 - September 20th Club Fun Flys
 - October 1st Club Meeting 8 PM - Show & Tell
 - October 15th Club Meeting 8 PM - Roy Valliancourt - Vailly Aviation to discuss his Stinson L-5 Sentinel
 - October 18th Club Fun Flys
- Meetings are held the first and third Thursday of each month at 8:00 PM at the First Presbyterian Church of Levittown located at 474 Wantagh Avenue. The church is about 1 mile north of Exit 28N on the Southern State Parkway. Additional information can be found on the club website - www.meroke.com.

Club Officers & Volunteers

President	Tony Pollio 516-794-9637	rctony@optonline.net
Vice President	Lou Pinto 516-785-6890	meroke36@aol.com
Treasurer	Herb Henery 631-665-6274	hahenery@aol.com
Recording Secretary	Ron Berg 516-781-3911	rberg20@ymail.com
Corresponding Secretary	Curtis Underdue 917-213-4459	curtisu@msn.com
Board of Directors	Dave Bell 516-633-0034 Ed Wiemann 516-735-0733 Nelson Ramos 631-420-2889 Ted Evangelatos 516-997-0451	dave.bell0323@verizon.net eww46@man.com nel98rc@optonline.net tevangelatos@yahoo.com
Chief Field Controller	Bob Reynolds	mrbrew@optonline.net
Asst Chief Field Controllers	Tony Pollio 516-794-9637 Ed Wiemann 516-735-0733	rctony@optonline.net eww46@man.com
Field Safety Officer	Doug Frie 516-481-4089	dfrie@optonline.net
Smoke Signals Editor	Russell Rhine 516-484-0368	rrhine@optonline.net
Membership Committee Programs	Frank Lasala Jaclyn Tavorario	Lou Pinto Harvey Schwartz
Education	Jaclyn Tavorario	Phil Friedensohn-Advisor
Friends of Cedar Creek	Charlie Lando George Carley	Ed Wiemann
Building Program Archivists	Charlie Lando Ron Berg	Ernie Schack Stan Blum
Webmaster	Ted Evangelatos	
Social (Coffee) Raffles	Irv Kreutel Curtis Underdue	Al Hammer
Show and Tell	Ed Wiemann	
Video Librarian	Bob Cook	
Audio/Visual	Tom Cott	
Come Fly With Me	Charlie Lando	Dave Bell
Open Fly-In	Emie Schack	Dave Bell
TAG Program	Charlie Lando	
Monthly Fun Fly	Chris Mantzaris	Gene Kolakowski
One Fly Dinner	Ted Evangelatos Jaclyn Tavorario	Jaclyn Tavorario
Picnic	Chris Mantzaris	Nick Giuffre
Contest Directors	Allen Berg Emie Schack	Tony Pollio Tom Scotto
Flight Instructors	Allen Berg Douglas Frie Mark Klein Ken Mandel Tony Pollio Bob Reynolds	Ted Evangelatos Dan Gramenga Gene Kolakowski Tim Murphy Mike Hagens* Bill Streb
*Flight Instruction Coordinator	Mike Hagens	Al Weiner 516-546-6773

A Note of Thanks

The following email was sent to Charlie Lando after our TAG event.

Thank you for the wonderful event this past Sunday at Cedar Creek Park. We brought Ryan and Sean and they had a ball. I'm pretty sure they are hooked on flying. They came back home that day and got on the computer looking up the website for planes. Everyone there was very kind and friendly. Thank you again, and I'm sure we'll be back to watch you fly your planes.

Barbara McDonald

Another Note of Thanks

Once again, the members of the Merokes hosted a successful Open Fun Fly on June 7th. Too many of our members provided their services for me to mention each of them individually and I wouldn't attempt to for fear of overlooking someone. All who contributed did a great job and should be satisfied with their efforts and proud of the results.

I would like to mention those in the industry who supported us with contributions and suggest that we show our appreciation by supporting them. Following is an alphabetical list of contributors

Great Planes
Hobbico
Horizon
Kangke
Micro Fasteners
Nassau Hobbies
Northeast Screen Graphics
Bob Smith Inds
Windsor Propeller
Xtreme Hobbies

On behalf of the club as a whole, I would like to thank everyone for their efforts.

Ernie Schack

New Members

Paul Fornuto, Gregory Bernard, Robert Adelman,
Vlad Pean & Joe Petruzza

From the President

"On November 19, 2009, less than four months from now, we will be conducting our annual election for club officers and board of directors. If you wish to stay in office, or be considered for a position, now is the time to let the Nominating Committee know that you wish to be considered for a position as an officer or director. Contact Ernie Schack, chair of the Nominating Committee.

The club officer positions available are President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. Also, three or four of the nine Board of Director positions will be available. The five club officers elected and the last past president (if not a current officer), make up six of the nine board members as per our by-laws.

Potential candidates for office will be given an opportunity to speak to our club members at our September 3rd and October 1st meetings, during the business portion of the meetings, under new business. Members present will be given an opportunity to ask the potential candidates to answer pertinent questions.

Bringing about positive changes that improve club operations and activities requires that members with creative ideas and unique skills step up and volunteer to serve as a club officer or director.

Decide now, the position for which you wish to be considered and let Nominating Committee chair Ernie Schack know as soon as possible."

Tony Pollio

The Gate

The long anticipated evacuation of the security house has finally happened. However, we now have a gate at the entrance to the rear of the Cedar Creek Park property. The gate will be opened in the morning and closed at night by Park Department personnel. If a group of fliers want to stay at the field for an evening BBQ, then it's someone in the groups responsibility to lock the gate after everyone leaves. This is a small bit of security for our field, and we may not have even had this without all of the efforts we expended last year. Let's see if we get the promised security cameras.

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June's Program - Tom Gwynne

In June, we were honored to hear a very interesting presentation by a person - Tom Gwynne - Who has had an outstanding career in aviation. He kept our attention stories from his time as an Air Force fighter pilot who flew in Viet Nam, till his days as a Grumman test pilot and then to his time with the Cradle of Aviation. Following is a brief biography of Tom's life and career.

John T. (Tom) Gwynne was born and raised on Staten Island, NY. He attended the Staten Island Academy and subsequently Brown University, where he graduated with a B. A. degree, having majored in International Relations.

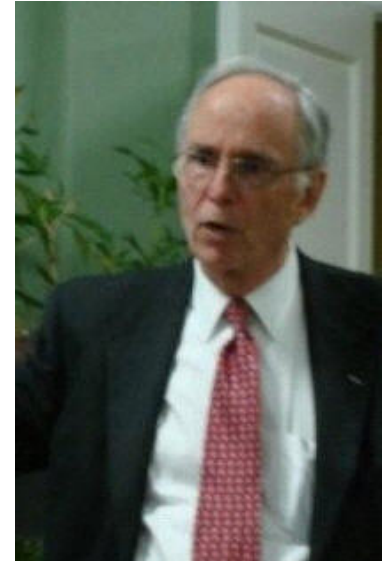
Following graduation from Brown, he was commissioned an officer in the United States Air

Force and attended a one-year pilot training program in Alabama. Assigned to a fighter squadron, he served as an F-4 pilot for 6 years, including a combat tour in Vietnam during which he was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses and 10 Air Medals.

Tom left the Air Force in 1969 and joined the Grumman Corporation of Bethpage, NY as a consultant on the Apollo Program. In 1972 he joined Grumman's Flight Test Department, and spent the next 15 years as a test pilot for Grumman's tactical aircraft product line, test-flying the F-14, A-6, EA-6B, EF-111, OV-1, and Gulfstream III aircraft. In 1989 he was appointed Director of Flight Operations at Grumman's final assembly facility at Calverton, New York, transferring in 1994 to Florida to become Operations Manager of Grumman's St. Augustine facility. He retired from Grumman in early 1997.

In July of 1997 Tom was appointed Planning Manager for the Cradle of Aviation Museum at Mitchel Field, Garden City, NY. In 2001 he was promoted to the post of Vice President for Programs.

Hats off to Jaclyn for scheduling this presentation.



Airborne RC Battery Indicators

What a brilliant idea... a little electronic gauge that will tell you just how much charge is left in the battery which powers your receiver and servos.

Instead of guessing whether your battery has enough charge for one more flight, what if you could actually see how much capacity remains?



Even better, what if that gauge was able to be seen and read from a distance, so you could check now and then by doing a low-pass down the flight-line

Well that's the theory... what's the reality?

Perhaps the most common of these battery indicators is the smart little unit sold under a number of different brand-names and which consists of an array of bright LEDs, a switch to choose between 4.8V and 6.0V, and short lead to plug into your receiver.

Quality of construction

While the basic circuit-board is quite sound and reasonably well constructed, thanks to the use of subminiature surface-mounted components, the tiny switch on several of the units tested was intermittent - not good.

The units come with double-sided foam tape already affixed to the back surface making them easy to install on most models but difficult to remove once fitted.

The supplied lead is probably plenty-long enough for most installations and is fitted with a universal (JR/Hitec/Airtronics) connector that should fit any standard RC system.

How well does it work?

Obviously what you really want to know about this is whether it really can tell you how charged your batteries are.

Several units were tested by applying a variable regulated voltage to the units and noting at what point the different LEDs illuminated.

Here's what was discovered..

Switch	RED	Lo GREEN	Hi GREEN
6.0V	5.75V	5.84V	6.11V
4.8V	4.70V	4.82V	5.29V

So what does this mean?

Well it look as if the Hextronic/TowerPro battery indicator would be a fairly accurate indicator of most modern NiCad or NiMH battery packs.

What was a surprise however, is the fact that the low-green level for the 4.8V pack is still higher than the "nominal" voltage of 4.8V, whereas the low-green level for the 6V pack is actually well under 6V.

In practice, this may be a good thing, since a 5-cell pack has more reserve voltage headroom anyway so is less likely to produce a brownout or receiver reboot than a 4-cell one anyway.

The Verdict...

So are these things really worth the paltry amount the cost, or might they tempt you to have just one flight too many because you're still "in the green"?

Based on the sample tested, it would seem that the "RED" voltage is still fairly conservatively high making it unlikely they'll over-estimate your remaining capacity.



However, the most effective way to be sure you're not going to run your batteries flat is to use a modern charger/cycler to measure the remaining capacity once the red LEDs start to glow.

Experience indicates that most 40-sized models consume anything from 80-140mAh per flight and it was a pleasure to see that the red light on one of the flown

models actually left enough for two safe flights because there was in fact some 350mAH remaining in the pack.

On their own, these devices aren't a guarantee against running out of battery power but they are an excellent reminder and a warning against some other problem that might cause your batteries to dip unexpectedly.

And besides, they look kind of cool, especially if you mount them inside a model's cockpit so they're visible through the windows.

2.4GHz Teething Troubles Bite Many Users

Spread spectrum radio control equipment on the 2.4GHz band has now been around for well over a few years and it's hard to find a single system that hasn't had at least a few teething problems.

It's only natural that such a dramatic shift in technology will result in unforeseen issues raising their heads and no manufacturer is immune to this.

Spectrum/JR

One of the very first to offer a 2.4GHz system and now the most popular brand, having many times more systems in use than any other manufacturer, it's only natural that the problems encountered by users of this equipment would be more widely known.

The very first systems suffered from a very slow re-link time (as much as 10 seconds or more) in the event that the receiver rebooted due to low-voltage or a voltage spike.

This problem was exacerbated by the fact that the systems were shipped with just a 4-cell (4.8V) receiver pack which could easily be pulled down to 4V or less by several servos operating simultaneously. That's a voltage low enough to cause the receiver to reboot, effectively causing all control to be lost. The problem was also made worse by the number of people flying electric models with inadequate BECs that would also allow the receiver voltage to drop low enough to cause a reboot.

To their credit, the manufacturer has quickly addressed the problem and now there are several "fixes". Firstly,

the software in the receiver has been updated to allow a faster relink time (often under 1 second) in the event that the receiver reboots.

Secondly, a "supercapacitor" is available that will help reduce the effect of momentary voltage spikes or drops -- acting like a very tiny backup battery.

Thirdly, users are now encouraged to use a 5-cell (6V) receiver pack so as to allow far more "headroom" between the reboot voltage and that delivered by the battery.

The next issue affecting JR/Spectrum gear was that of poor switch wiring on the AR9100 receiver. A stray wire could cause these "smart" switches to fail. This was quickly addressed by both users and the manufacturer.

Most recently, users of the X9303 transmitter have found that internal wiring can have its insulation worn away by contact with an internal regulator device. Once again the manufacturer has been quick to post this advisory and offer a free repair for anyone whose gear may be affected.

Look for problems that have occurred with the Futaba FASST system.



Flight Techniques

Wind Correction

Wind correction is another factor that will influence straight and level flight and your vertical lines. (Note: "wind correction" means that you must lean the plane's heading slightly into the wind to keep the plane's flight path parallel to the runway and perpendicular to the ground during a vertical climb.) if the plane is crabbed during a vertical entry, it will immediately lean toward the direction of the crab. You may need to take some of the crab out of the plane with rudder immediately before the pull. (I emphasize the word "some" to signify that there is no hard-and-fast rule concerning how much to remove.) A certain amount of crab angle wind correction should be maintained to keep it parallel to the runway. In IMAC competition, you may want to leave in some of this crab since all vertical maneuvers are affected by the wind direction. Each plane will act differently depending on its weight, the length of its tail moment and the amount of crosswind velocity. The only way to find how much crab angle you'll need to remove is by practicing.

Tech Tip

Get More Out of a Servo

We're looking for work from a servo, not just torque. Work is a product of torque and angular travel. Increasing a servo's travel by a third increases its available work output to full throw by the same amount. This is just as effective as increasing its torque by a third. Response speed will be similarly reduced, but large models seldom need really fast servos. A "travel-increased" servo that is less heavily loaded may even move to full travel faster than a normal-travel servo that's loaded to nearly stall torque.

Increasing angular servo travel provide an opportunity to increase the mechanical advantage of the control linkage: use a pushrod hole that is farther out on the control surface horn. This longer lever arm reduces the torque required from the servo for a given deflection of the control surface.

Lufbery Update

The Committee (Charles Lando, Harvey Schwartz and Russell Rhine) to Honor Major Raoul Lufbery and the name the Cedar Creek Aerodrome in his honor have completed the proposal. A package containing a cover letter, four (4) letters of support and the proposal was mailed to Thomas Suozzi - Nassau County Executive. Copies of the package have also been sent to Ian Siegel (Deputy County Executive), Jose Lopez (Commissioner of Parks) and David Denenberg (County Legislator). Hopefully by the September Smoke Signals we will have some good news.

CHICKEN WINGS™



Monthly Fun Fly

The 2009 Monthly Fun Fly Season continued last month with its 4th meeting with 8 fliers competing. The year to date standings are as follows:

Place	Flier	Points
1	Bob Reynolds	41
2	Ted Evangelatos	50
3	Tom Tavorario	57
4	Curtis Underdue*	92
5	Nelson Ramos	95
6	Gene Kolakowski	98
7	Patrick Boll	103
8	Allen Berg	106
9	Ron Berg*	111
9	Richard Boll	111
11	Tony Pollio*	113
11	Chris Mantzaris*	113
13	Mark Klein*	122
14	Kevin Urso*	127

* Did not compete

August Birthdays

- 3 Nicholas Guiffre*****
- 21 Elias Miranda
- 23 Larry Rosenthal*****

* Big One



BY MICHAEL AND STEFAN STRASSER